

The Church of Our Lady in Csongrád

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Csongrád was a typical Hungarian, Roman Catholic settlement from the Southern Great Plain with a continuously growing population due to the favourable tax conditions. Despite the fact that the landlord and patron, Count Ferenc Károlyi and later his son, Antal Károlyi gradually lifted the exemptions and the tax burden of the serfdom, by the middle of the century, the population of Csongrád increased to nearly six thousand people and the settlement started to expand towards the West.¹ Due to the densely built nature, the peninsula-like centre – with the church dedicated to Our Lady (present-day Saint Roch church) in the middle – was unable to serve the growing needs of the evolving city, therefore a new centre had to be established.²

The intention of building a new church already came up at the beginning of 1760; as we find out from the letter written by Csongrád's parish priest, Márton Berinkeý on April 20, 1760, in which he informed the patron Antal Károlyi (1732–1791) that as soon as he, or someone he assigned, marked out the location where the new church would be built, the priest would immediately start preparation works, supplying the limestone and the slaked lime.³ Antal Károlyi eventually trusted the people of Csongrád with choosing the location for the new church in 1761 and endorsed the launch of the construction works with a donation of 500 Forints. We learn this from a letter he sent from Hódmezővásárhely, in which he conditions that he would commission the design plans for the church himself.⁴ Antal Károlyi – the grandson of Sándor Károlyi (1669–1743) – made the final decisions about the design plans, the building materials and the interior design; the altar, the pulpit, the organ, the bells and the

various equipment, liturgical objects. These are primarily documented in the archival sources of the *Historia Domus* (history of the parish) at the Csongrád parish church archives and at the archives of the Károlyi family (National Archives of Hungary, Budapest) and at the Vác Episcopal and Chapter Archives.

Károlyi sent his ideas and concepts about the building's structure and design beforehand to the Vác episcopal office.⁵ Until the spring of 1763, several proposals and variants were made for the church's design plans. These were first sent to the parish priest who forwarded them to Antal Károlyi so that he could select the one he preferred. We learn from the count's reply dated March 29, 1763, that he decided to go with the design variant marked 'B'. He authorised, furthermore, to hire József Peitmiller, an architect from Pest considered to be the most competent for the task, to be in charge of construction. In his letter, he urged the works to begin and to lay the cornerstone, which he would be unable to attend due to other engagements.⁶ István Fábián parish priest informed the bishop of Vác about the developments, attaching a copy of Károlyi's letter to his. He asked the diocesan bishop to appoint the date of the laying of the cornerstone at his convenience; or if he would not be able to attend in person, to send someone in his place. The parish priest wished to conclude the ceremony by May 1 the latest.⁷

The foundations of the new church were marked out on the premises of an old cemetery condemned for demolition, with a small chapel dedicated to Saint Roch, Rosalia and Sebastian on it. Although the cornerstone was only laid in the spring of 1763, it is fair to assume that the preparation of the construction work, the pro-

curement of the materials and the excavation of the foundation had already begun in 1762; which is also attested by some of the sources.⁸

In 1768, in the last phases of construction, Antal Károlyi asked the bonorum director of Csongrád to send him the design plans and the budget calculations of the church. István Vargha, the inspector of Csongrád sent the requested documents on May 29, 1768, although the attached reply letter clarifies that the enclosed design plans are not the ones they eventually used for the construction; because during the implementation process they have made some minor modifications to it and the amended design plans were taken by the master mason to Pest.⁹

The count's intention with the design plans of the almost finished church is unclear. Perhaps he merely wanted to log them into the family archives; or maybe he wanted to use the plans as a pattern for designing other buildings. It is more probable, however, that he needed the plans for

designing the upper level and the spire of the unfinished steeple or the high altar. The drawings and budget calculations enclosed with the letter could be identical with the ones preserved in the Károlyi archives. The layout of the church in the design drawings – except for the later renovations, the blazoned gate structure – is almost perfectly identical with the current building.¹⁰

The modified drawings that the master mason took with him, would perhaps also answer the question whether there was or was not a 'crypt'. Even though the original plans did not include the crypt, oral tradition still preserved its memory until today. Mihály Szarka mentions in his memoir the exact date (1910–11) of the crypt being walled in.¹¹ Lajos Dudás notes that, according to local recollections, the burial place under the church (or rather under one part of the church) was never used.¹² These presumptions could only be confirmed by a comprehensive archaeological investigation.

The construction works of the church lasted seven years, until 1769: the costs were partly covered by the patron of the church and partly by the inhabitants of Csongrád.¹³ The city borrowed 6000 Forints from the landlord to fund the construction, and Károlyi also endorsed the works with 500 Forint each year. According to the data of Lajos Dudás, due to the shortage of building stones, they transported all of the building material they could find in the surrounding area to add to the foundation of the church – even the stones from the Nagykőhalom church once standing on the borderlines of the settlements of Bokros and Tiszaújfalu.¹⁴

It was in 1768 that the (tile) roofing of the church was finished.¹⁵ The two side-altars were also completed by this time; one dedicated to Saint Anne, the other to Corpus Salvatoris Nostri (Eucharist, or the Holy body of our Saviour). The high altar was completely missing at the beginning. In order to have at least a temporary altarpiece, István Vincze parish priest wrote a letter in 1770 to Kristóf Migazzi bishop of Vác in which





he asked permission to transport the privileged altarpiece from the old parish church to the new building.¹⁶ After obtaining the necessary authorisation, the painting was transferred to its new place, and József (Antal) Erdélyi provost blessed the new church with the title of the Assumption of Mary on the feast day of the Assumption.¹⁷ Thereby, the dedication to Mary of the former Our Lady parish church was transferred to the new church, and the Belsőváros church inherited the altar of the Saints Roch, Rosalia and Sebastian chapel demolished a few years later, as well as the title of Saint Roch.¹⁸

After the new parish church was finished, the settlement became typically 'bipolar'; the demarcation line between the old and the new centres (in the documentation of the age referred to as *Belsőváros* or 'inner city' and *Külsőváros* or 'outer city') became more and more distinct. According to the census conducted by András Kanyó parish priest in 1783, from the approximate population of 5700 of Csongrád, there were only around 1100 people living in the Belsőváros; which

meant that the majority of the inhabitants had already built their homes in the area between the new parish church and the River Tisza.¹⁹

In the year of consecration of the church, the tower was presumably only finished until the level of the cornice. The bells were stored in the wooden belfry raised next to the church.²⁰ Not long after the construction was finished, there were problems with the roof. Besides installing a high altar, in 1773 the parish priest also tried to convince the count of renovating the roof. Károlyi eventually lent the necessary funds for repairing the "barely finished, yet already damaged" roof from the landlord's treasury. He offered the profit of a manorial demesne to cover the costs.²¹ In 1776, the roof was damaged once again due to the strong winds. This time, organising the repairs and commissioning a tiler was the responsibility of the bonorum director.²²

In 1782 there was another heavy wind incident, which damaged the roofing of the church. András Kanyó parish priest, as his predecessors, also turned to Antal Károlyi for help; and besides



the roof repair, he also petitioned for the construction of the steeple and the high altar.²³ Finally, they hired Balthasar Fischer, a mason master from Kecskemét to repair the roof who, in order to prevent future damages, raised the cornice of the church so that it would absorb the force of the wind endangering the roof.²⁴

They started raising the steeple higher in 1784 and finished it the following year.²⁵ The work had to be done, since – as we learn from the report of János Dudovits, the *rationista dominalis* of Csongrád – the range of audibility of the low-set bells was too narrow, so the inhabitants could not be informed of the exact time of mass.²⁶ At this point, we should mention an alternative narrative, which has been popular at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but which lacks any real basis, according to which the building was designed to have two towers, the walls were built up to the height of the roof accordingly; but the city was unable to finish construction from its own resources and sought the sup-

port of Antal Károlyi, who had built only one steeple, which was disproportionately thin to the church.²⁷ Another popular misbelief about the construction of the steeple claimed that they ran out of bricks during construction, which is why the tower ended up to be too short.²⁸

During this same period, Károlyi had the church painted white; and had the floor laid with rectangular stones. He also saw to have new bells and a tower clock. The first clock was made in Buda in the workshop of István Miller in 1795.²⁹

In 1791, due to the bad state of the roof, the church vault cracked, so the parish priest of the time, András Kanyó, turned once again to the patron of the church, Antal Károlyi, to have the heavy roof tiles replaced with shingles.³⁰ His wishes were granted by the widow of the since deceased count, Jozefa Harruckern, in 1792.³¹

The following time when the roofing of the church needed repairing was in 1824. They had to completely replace the roof structure, men-acing to collapse, which they then covered with

shingles again.³² The patron insisted on using wood from around the Mureş River ('marosi fák') bought in Arad. He stipulated in a letter that if they cannot get the wood from Arad, it has to be transported from Pest.³³

In 1831, the wind broke off the cross and the ball of the church.³⁴ With the patronal authorisation of István Károlyi, the steeple was heightened a little in 1842.³⁵ Consecration of the church took place in the same year by the incentive of the diocesan bishop of Vác, Ferenc Nádasdy. The twelve places where they anointed the walls with holy oil, is commemorated with twelve painted consecration crosses.³⁶

Due to the frequent fires, in 1871 they built an iron gallery (or in the local vernacular: the 'go-around'). The parish priest justified it with the following explanation: "although the town provides two tower guards to watch over the great church, their service is useless, since, not having enough space to move, they fall asleep quickly; and in case of a fire, it is not them who warn the people, but the other way around."³⁷ The design plans and cost estimates of the gallery were made by the manorial geometra and approved by József Rappensberger engineer.³⁸ Gellért Váry commissioned a locksmith from Csongrád called Bócsa for the construction.³⁹ The tower and the vaults of the organ loft ('choir') was finished in 1873

under the supervision of Mihály Horváth architect.⁴⁰ The wooden flooring was replaced with iron sheets in 1912.⁴¹

The raising of the steeple, considered to be proportionately too short to the church and "not easy on the eyes"⁴², was initiated by the magistrate in 1886⁴³ of Csongrád after a violent windstorm caused grave damage to the tin roofing. The costs were covered by the treasury of the settlement and of the church, by donations and by patronal funding. The design plans were made by Endre Makai, and architect from Budapest, who was born in Csongrád made the plans pro bono to pay tribute to his home town.⁴⁴ The stone masons, the copper smith and the foreman were master craftsmen from Kecskemét and Hódmezővásárhely.⁴⁵ The original tin spire of the steeple designed by Joseph Bittheuser (the manorial architect of the Károlyi family) was replaced;⁴⁶ the new spire – presumably higher than the original – was made of red copper. On October 26, 1886, they have installed a lightning conductor, a small cross, and placed a small memorial inside the sphere supporting the cross.⁴⁷

In 1891, the magistrate installed a room for a fire watch under the bells – without asking the church authorities.⁴⁸ Antal Hegyi parish priest expressed in an angry letter to his superiors that the town had constructed a dangerous fire nest fabricated of planks and installed with the most primitive heating [...]; this so-called cabin or shelter is greatly endangering the safety of the church and its equipment, especially since there are several cords of firewood piled up in the tower."⁴⁹ His complaint was addressed by a decision of the vicecomes, which ordered the settlement to replace the plank walls of the watch cabin with a brick wall laid on lime mortar. And firewood was only allowed in a quantity necessary for the daily heating needs.⁵⁰

The fire watch was employed by the town, their task was to continuously keep watch over the boundaries of the settlement. In the 1850s and 60s, when the town had no official clock mas-





Üdvözet Csongrádról.

Rom. kath. nagytemplom belseje.

ter, they were also responsible for winding up and greasing the tower clock.⁵¹ They patrolled the balcony every fifteen minutes and shouted 'Praised be Jesus Christ' in the four cardinal directions to show that they were awake. If they noticed a fire, they rang the big bells and stuck a red flag, or in the night a red light, on the side of the gallery to indicate the direction of the peril.⁵² After 1896, Csongrád was divided into four districts, and thereafter the fire watch could signal the number of affected districts with the chimes of the bell.⁵³ It only attests the importance of their job that the first telephone line of the town was installed between the tower and the town hall across in 1901.⁵⁴ In the 1920s, the members of the fire watch also served as sextons.⁵⁵

The watchtower's heating in the winter was a permanent issue, for as long as their post existed. "These God-given old men are sitting around in the windy tower wearing almost summer clothes in this freezing cold. Before, they had a small cabin with an iron stove where they could warm up their numb limbs every now and then. The council, however, demolished it by saying that the guards were around the warm stove instead of keeping watch." – reported a Csongrád newspaper in the winter of 1911.⁵⁶ A little later, the town bought a petroleum heater for the tower. The new stove was not only an unhealthy choice, they also did not provide the petroleum on which it would run.⁵⁷ The guards ended up carrying up firewood in a cauldron to the watch tower.⁵⁸

In the 1850s, the town first hired József Schweizner, György Kammerer, then József Kammerer for the greasing, winding up and the maintenance of the tower clock. In the subsequent decades, it was Pál Kammerer, Balázs Szöllősy, then Dezső Kammerer who were responsible for the operation of the clock.⁵⁹ In the last third of the nineteenth century the superannuated clockwork became very unreliable. Despite the efforts of regularly repairing and synchronising it with the clocks of the train station, the ship harbour and the telegraph office, it often failed to give

the right time, to the great regret of travellers. As a temporary solution, the clockwork received a wooden pulpit in 1897 to protect it from the wind.⁶⁰

Antal Hegyi parish priest desolately reported to his ecclesiastical superiors in 1889 that "although the architecture of the parish church of Csongrád is incomparable, so is the dilapidated state of the building, inside and outside."⁶¹ Parish priest Hegyi, being an active and an orderly person, worked strenuously on embellishing the church and improving the equipment. His dedication, his (usually realised) new ideas are attested in his letters addressed to the Bishopric of Vác. He sacrificed part of his own wages for covering the interior walls of the church (1.5 meters high) with an oily paint, for laying the mosaic tiles and making the ceramic coating of the sanctuary and the sacristy.⁶² He effected an insurance for the interior equipment and transformed the inward-opening oak doors into outward-opening doors for fire safety reasons.⁶³

In 1895, Count Sándor Károlyi, the patron of the church had the roof tarred, and a year later – on the occasion of the Millennium – he also had the exterior walls whitewashed.⁶⁴ In 1904, the exterior plastering of the steeple was quite worn down by weather/time and by the bell-ringing: both the paint and the ornaments were coming off. The patron renovated the walls for the feast day of Our Lady.⁶⁵ In the summer of 1905, the vaulting of the gallery cracked under the exceptional weight of the regularly used Sacred Heart bell, therefore it had to be reinforced with iron bars.⁶⁶

In the same period, the town authorities had enough of the population's complaints and took measures to renovate, or replace if necessary, the tower clock. However, the issue of the clock remained unsolved for years due to the heated debate about the price offers. In 1910, the *Csongrádi Újság* (a local newspaper) sharply criticised the inability of the council and gave a sarcastic description of the circumstances.⁶⁷

Originally, there was only one door on the façade of the church: the door leading to the choir; the other 'blind' door was installed in 1910–1911 for the sake of symmetry.⁶⁸ Electric lighting was introduced in 1913 by Dr Károly Thury parish priest; first around the altar of Mary of Lourdes.⁶⁹ Between 1914–1915 the interior walls of the church were repainted; and at the same time, various restorations were done as well: the altars were renovated and they made new stained-glass windows. The long-awaited replacement of the tower clock finally took place between the two world wars, in 1925. The worn-down clockwork was installed in the tower of the Saint Roch church. The dial of the new clock was made in Budapest and made of milk glass with electrical background lighting.⁷⁰

In 1940, the town invested in sound amplifiers for the church with the aim of improving the acoustics.⁷¹ The building was replastered in 1946. In the same year, there was a leak in the roof and the paint was damaged in several places. The Eternit factory in Pest took on the renovation of the roof in exchange for 275 kg of lard.⁷²

The transformation of the storage space on the left side of the church (Our Lady's side) into a baptistery was approved by the Diocesan Bishop of Vác in 1952. His only condition was to send him the plans for approval to Vác in case they were going to make a figurative painting.⁷³

In 1958 the city council authorised the exterior renovation of the church, referring to monument preservation. The renovations were led by a master mason from Budapest, József Jentetics. They also repaired the slate roofing; and the eaves were repaired by a tinsmith from Budapest, Endre Marosi.⁷⁴

The exterior of the church was renovated once again in 2010: the construction was done by the Prefabrication and Construction Contractor Limited Liability Company of Kiskunfélegyháza. The walls were insulated and the façade was renovated; the roofing was repaired and the tile cladding was finished. The diocese had to ensure 13 million forints as own contribution to fund the renovations.⁷⁵

The East-West orientated church building consists of a nave extended with three compartments on each side and closes in an apse and a lengthened chancel. The south side of the chancel is connected to the sacristy; the northern side to the former baptistery, currently used as a storage unit, with an oratory above them.⁷⁶ The oratory on the Gospel side of the altar serves today as a storage unit; the oratory on the Epistle side was formerly used as a divinity lecture room.

The main elements of the church walls' decorative painting are the murals decorating the sanctuary and the nave vaults. In the centre intrados of the chancel's vault we see an angel against a background of golden-lit clouds, holding the Saviour's rose-adorned cross and a key. Next to him is a putto raising a chalice referring to the Holy communion. In the left, lower corner, we can read the signature of the painter: Lohr F[erenc] 1914. In the right section is a painting depicting the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments; on the left we see putti carrying the Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*). The centre of the semi-dome above the chancel is decorated with a mural of the Lord God giving out blessings from his heavenly throne, he is surrounded by an army of angels. Beneath them are archangels looking down from a gallery marked with the letters A and Ω: in the middle is Saint Michael holding a flaming sword and scales; on his right is Gabriel archangel with a lily; on his left is another archangel. The pendentives are decorated with flower bouquets. Above the windows of the oratory there are images of Saint Stephen and Saint Ladislaus with the inscriptions: 'King Stephen, look down on us, let the prayer of the Hungarians come true' and 'Oh, Saint Ladislaus, defend our faith, protect the Hungarian people'. On the arch, the inscription refers to the title of the church (*Honori Beatae Mariae Virginis Assumptae*).

The Bohemian vault of the nave is divided into three segments by transverse arches; all three sections are decorated with three mural paintings each. In the axis of the first vault unit, there

is a cartouche decorated with clouds, on the two sides of which we see the scenes of the Annunciation and the Adoration of the Shepherds. In the latter, we also see the angels who accompanied the shepherds to Bethlehem, and who were the firsts to greet the baby Jesus. The main theme of the centre vault unit is the scene of Saint Stephen offering the country to the Virgin Mary. She appears sitting on her throne in the clouds, with the baby Jesus in her arms, surrounded by angels and putti. At her feet kneels Saint Stephen, and a little further we find the coronation regalia. Below them – in the earthly sphere – we see an armed, bannered crowd on the right and, on the left, a group of simple harvest workers standing. The two side compartments each represent angels standing under a canopy. Similar to the first compartment on the chancel's side, in the centre of the last vault compartment, the one closest to the organ loft, there is another cartouche decorated with clouds with two adjacent figural representations. The one on the left is of Mary meeting Elisabeth in the company of Saint Joseph and Zachary; the one on the right depicts the engagement

of Mary. In the latter, besides the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph holding a rod in bloom; we also see a pontiff and a parish clerk holding a scroll, as well as Joachim and Saint Anne and a figure of an angel. Above the organ loft the inscription reads *Sing to the Lord!*

The layout and furnishing of the church interior, as well as its early-twentieth-century decorative painting harmoniously form a whole, despite the fact that they are dated to different periods.

The high altar is raised at the closing of the lengthened chancel under a Bohemian vault and a semi-dome. The central part of the high altar's structure supported by columns, which includes the main altarpiece depicting the Assumption of Mary, is enclosed by the two windows segmenting the sanctuary. The lateral, structurally separate elements are on the nave-side of the windows and stand somewhat forward, thus closing down the apse; while also optically providing a unified frame for the main altar. The altar piece is framed by two columns with Ionic capitals with accented rosettes and dentils decorating its cornice. On top of the cornice we see the statues of Saint





Ladislaus and Saint Stephen wearing Hungarian garments. On the right, Saint Stephen dedicates his crown, on the left Saint Ladislaus his sword to the Virgin Mary. The round-arched pediment of the altar is raised above the cornice, with urns decorating each side of the gable, with a composition of the Holy Trinity in its tympanum. The columns beside the central part of the altar structure also support cornices with half-kneeling, adoring angels on top of each.

The structure of the main altar was not finished by the consecration of the church (1769), thus, the altarpiece was presumably placed in the sanctuary without the surrounding structure. It was Antal Károlyi himself who promised to set up a high altar. The preparations of this work, taking the necessary measurements, consulting with master craftsmen, ordering the sculptures and the altarpiece, was commissioned to Joseph Bittheuser manorial architect. According to Bittheuser's report to Antal Károlyi on 16 April 1787, the

design plans for the altar were already finished by then; he even enclosed two of the plans to a sculptor by the name Fischer.⁷⁷ They asked Joannes Godefridus Brindrich from Bratislava to make the main structure of the altar. The gilding was done by the master gilder József Hinger; they were paid a total of 741 florins for his work. According to the *Historia Domus*, the white marble tabernacle and the two angel figures were also finished at this time.⁷⁸ The tabernacle is probably the work of Johann Martin Fischer, based on its similarity of design with the altar in Nagykároly (*Carei*). The main altar was eventually finished after the death of Antal Károlyi, with the help of his widow, Jozefa Harruckern, in 1792.⁷⁹ The altar table was too narrow for solemn masses (celebrated with three sacred ministers); therefore, in 1904, during the time of József Porubszky parish priest, it was extended by supplementing the edges of the marble altar mensa with planks. At the same time, the tabernacle was given a new bronze

door and an embroidered silk tapestry. The altar structure was covered with a white-based mosaic paint, the sculptures received polychrome coating and the ornaments were re-gilded.⁸⁰

Joseph Bittheuser, who had been observing the construction of the high altar, sent a report to the patron in 1787, which included a document containing – among others – the dimensions of the planned altar piece representing Mary's assumption⁸¹ as well as a proportional scale of the altar for the painter Ignaz Cimbal.⁸² The altar piece of the baroque high altar painted by Cimbal was replaced in 1873, during the time of Ferenc Alvinczy parish priest. The new painting was painted by György Körrey, painter from Szegvár, and modelled on the main altarpiece by Michelangelo Grigoletti representing the Assumption of Mary⁸³ – copying the painting of Titian – made for the Esztergom Basilica. The altarpiece was replaced for a third time in 1894 with the painting of Ferenc Vannay local art teacher. As its predecessor painted by Körrey, this painting also copied Titian's *Assunta* (Assumption of Mary).⁸⁴ The current altarpiece was painted by Lajos Tary – according to Lajos Dudás and to the signature in the corner of the painting.⁸⁵ However, according to contemporary press information and the contract concluded with the artists, one can assume that Tary only renovated the painting of Ferenc Vannay in 1917.⁸⁶

The structures of the two side altars (dedicated to Saint Anne and to John of Nepomuk) are practically identical: the altarpiece with semi-circular closing is enclosed by two, remarkable fluted columns with composite capitals supporting a cornice accentuated by dentils and following the arch of the semi-circular closing of the altarpiece, with allegoric sculpted decoration on top of it. In front of the columns, on both sides, are life-size statues of prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel) standing on separate pedestals.

The pediment of the Saint Anne altar is decorated with the allegoric statue of Hope holding an anchor and appearing in the company of an angel

and putti. The painted glass window above the altar represents Saint Joseph. The first altarpiece depicting Saint Anne was painted by a layman painter. In the 1770s, Pál Adamovits, the bailiff of the Károlyi family, had another picture painted in Eger; and he even had a new altar raised at his own expense.⁸⁷ It is unclear whether it is the old or a new painting of Saint Anne decorating the structure of the side altar, which was raised approximately at the same time as the high altar.⁸⁸ One thing is certain, however, that the 'outworn and tasteless' altarpiece of Saint Anne was replaced in 1867 with a new painting by György Körrey. Today, in place of Körrey's Saint Anne altarpiece we find the painting of Ferenc Vannay, local art teacher.

In the eighteenth century, instead of the present-day John of Nepomuk altar with its classicizing, late-baroque structure across the Saint Anne altar, was probably an altar dedicated to the Holy Communion – presumably as an after-effect of the late-medieval Holy Eucharist.⁸⁹ The new altar, built at the beginning of the 1790s, was already dedicated to Saint John of Nepomuk, re-



placing the original altar dedication.⁹⁰ The previous painting of the church representing John of Nepomuk did not stay survive. The currently seen painting was painted in 1892 by a painter named F(erenc) Müller.⁹¹

The sculpture of the altar of Mary of Lourdes next to the John of Nepomuk altar was commissioned in 1884 by János Edelényi parish priest from the workshop of master Josef Delago in St. Ulrich in Gröden (Tyrol). The purchase of the sculpture was initiated by the believers. After its arrival to the church, Mrs Pál Cseh, née Rozália Bagi, had an altar structure made for 600 florins in the Budapest factory Kriszta and Leitner specialised in church decoration. The new altar was consecrated on the name day of Mary on 10 September 1885. Due to its peculiar, 'modern' style, the new altar made a very heterogeneous impression in the late-baroque church.⁹² The authorisation for reconstruction was approved by the diocesan bishop of Vác in 1957 on the condition that they harmonise it with the style of the pulpit across the altar.⁹³ The present-day altar was made

by Isván Hatlacky in Budapest. The new altar structure, copying the details of the pulpit across it, did not display the inscription, which was formerly on top of the altar in a circle reading *I am the immaculate conception*. The Mary of Lourdes is the favourite altar of the Csongrád believers.

The paintings decorating the two middle compartments of the church are works by Csongrád painter István Piroska from 1910. The painting of Jesus on the cross was donated to the church by the widow of Pál Forgó, née Veronika Ürmös, according to the inscription on the bottom of the painting. The one representing the Virgin Mother holding his son (Pietà) – also painted by Piroska – was donated by János Máté and his wife, Márta Gyáni, wealthy local farmers. The paintings were consecrated on 14 August 1910.⁹⁴

The Purgatory altar of the church is in the compartment to the right of the entrance. The first, accurate source discussing the history of the altar is a protocol of an interrogation by the Episcopal See from 1898, which reveals that Antal Hegyi parish priest commissioned a painting of





the Purgatory in 1890 from local art teacher Ferenc Vannay.⁹⁵ We only know from allusions that, even before, there was a Purgatory painting decorating the side altar close to the entrance. In the picture, we see Our Lady of Mount Carmel in her brown scapular appeasing the souls suffering in the purgatory.

On the nave-side wall of the chancel arch's southern end there is large, classicising late Baroque ('copf'-style) pulpit with a rich, sculpted decoration. It was commissioned by Tamás Tóth parish priest in the 1770s and 80s.⁹⁶ The pulpit structure is carved of wood, decorated with gilded festoons and ribbon motifs. On the lower cornice of the pulpit there are four accentuated, approximately one-meter tall, dynamic sitting statues of the four evangelists; each one with their attributes: Mark with a lion, John with an eagle, Lucas with a bull, and Matthew with a putto (instead of an angel). Left to the pulpit is the red marble baptismal font, which Tamás Tóth parish

priest had had made between 1778-79. The font originally had a wooden cover decorated with the painted figure of John the Baptist.⁹⁷

The first organ of the Our Lady church was finished around 1778.⁹⁸ For one hundred years, the 16-stop instrument⁹⁹ only required minor renovations;¹⁰⁰ then, from the 1880s, its state deteriorated gradually.¹⁰¹ Parish priest Edelényi therefore commissioned two new organ bodies, increasing the 16 stops to 26, and drawing the organ closer to the centre of the church.¹⁰² Despite all efforts, the hundred-year-old instrument needed continuous maintenance and regular repair. The population started to collect funds, with the participation of several local merchants and cooperatives, as well as of numerous private individuals.¹⁰³ The organ building committee accepted the 20,000 korona price offer of Otto Rieger.¹⁰⁴ The new, two-manual pneumatic organ with 38 solo and 2 subsidiary stops was inaugurated at the end of 1910.¹⁰⁵



In the sanctuary, on the right of the high altar, is the painted, gilded wooden statue of the glorious Virgin made in the last third of the 1700s. Mary, wearing a red cloak over a blue dress, is sitting on her throne of clouds, holding a sceptre and an orb. According to the census, the carved, painted wooden statue representing the resurrected Jesus Christ was already part of the church furnishing in the eighteenth century. Jesus is wearing a red cloak, raising one hand to give blessing, the other holding a victory banner, on top of a globe. The presumably restored statue, in excellent condition, is currently resting in the inlaid cabinet in the sacristy: it is only moved outside, next to the holy grave – or nowadays, on a podium in the sanctuary – on Holy Saturdays and on Easter Sundays. The life-size statues of the founders of the Franciscan and Dominican orders were commissioned in 1894 by Antal Hegyi parish priest from the workshop of János Géberth in Budapest, for 180 florins a piece. The statue of Saint Dominic was paid for by the Rosary Association, and that

of Saint Francis by the Csongrád members of the Third Order of Saint Francis.¹⁰⁶ The statues are currently in the Saint Anne chapel. There are two Jesus statues in the Our Lady church: one is in the Sacred Heart chapel; the other at the entrance of the church. The first statue was presumably brought here from Tirol by János Edelényi parish priest, at the same time as the Mary of Lourdes. The other, made of plaster, could have been purchased by Antal Hegyi parish priest at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The latter is displayed in an easily accessible place, close to the entrance: its pedestal is always covered in fresh flowers and small gifts (angel statues, candles, impossible bottles) and slips of paper asking for answered prayers.

There were several votive paintings over the course of time in the Sacred Heart chapel. According to the inscription on the painting representing the child Jesus of Prague, it was commissioned by János Máté and Márta Gyánti in remembrance of their deceased son, Béla, in



1900.¹⁰⁷ The most modern painting of the chapel is also dedicated to the memory of a deceased person, Orsolya Dányi.¹⁰⁸ In the same chapel, we find a representation of Saint Wendelin, patron saint of cattle; which was ordered in 1857 by a wealthy local farmer, István Csany Forgó. In the back of the nave, on the left side, we see the painting of the Blessed Vilmos Apor bishop. The painting was commissioned by Veronika Simon M.¹⁰⁹

In 1897, to honour the patron saint of the poor, Antal Hegyi parish priest had a statue of Saint Anthony set up in the church. Hegyi had the statue placed in the present-day Saint Anthony chapel with the aim of using the donations placed next to it to bake bread “to help the lost, helpless poor people with the bread of Saint Anthony”.¹¹⁰

The veneration of the ‘modern’ saint who chose the innocence of Christ as her lifestyle, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, appeared in Csongrád between the two world wars. At first there was a painting of her in the parish church. The statue

seen today, which represents the saint nun with roses and a crucifix, is a plaster product made in the first decades of the twentieth century. It is probably a contemporary of the ‘Ecce Homo’ type statue of Jesus at the torture stake and of the statue of the Madonna of Victories to the left of the nave’s entrance. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there was even a donation box next to the statue of Saint Joseph, patron saint of labourers, the earnings of which were spent to cover the expenses of holy masses. The statue was made in 1891, at the same time as the statue of Mary’s Immaculate Heart.¹¹¹ The votive painting across the Saint Joseph statue represents Saint Anthony of Padua with a mother and her daughter praying at his feet. It is an early work of Géza (Szegedi) Molnár from 1933.

The Saint Rita wall altar to the right of the nave entrance was in part set up by Mrs Ferenc Esztergályos who attributed her recovery from a serious illness to the intervention of Saint Rita, the patron saint providing assistance in impossi-



ble situations. In the 1980s or 90s, she had a votive plaque made and also donated an altar frontal with embroidery from Kalocsa dedicated to the saint. Between Saint Rita and the Our Lady of Mount Carmel altars, we find a representation of the thirteenth-century virgin martyr, Saint Philomena. As in the case of Saint Rita, the veneration of Saint Philomena has also become stronger in the modern-age. Besides being an exceptional patron of the youth, she is also associated with miraculously answered prayers, escapes from hopeless situations, inexplicable healings. There are many people who solicit their help in difficult life situations; therefore, Saint Rita and Saint Philomena have a suited place in the tract of the church, which is easily accessible even during the day.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, several family pews were installed in the nave. In the 1890s, there was a total of sixteen family pews in the Our Lady church.¹¹² Many of these were still in place in the 1940s.¹¹³ The currently used pew system was made by the master carpenter Mátyás Tandari in 1904 and 1905.¹¹⁴ We find several family pews in various points of the nave, for instance on the organ loft and in the oratory above the baptistery. According to their inscriptions, they were commissioned by János Forgó (oratory), Pál Gyánti (left posterior tract of the nave) and János Máté (organ loft). The oldest 'private pew' one can visit today was used by Ignác Sziszik master cooper and his family from 1823 (Pietà altar).

The 1827 visitation protocol enlists among the furniture of the church numerous objects used during mass, such as chalice veils and other fabrics, embellished chalice palls, altar frontals and pulpit cloths.¹¹⁵ The rapidly worn down, unadorned white purificators and corporals were replaced by parish priests mostly at their own expense; in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the daughters and wives of local, church-supporter families were competing with each other to sew ornate chalice veils, altar frontals and pillows

for the prayer stools. The gift-giving gesture was often motivated by personal fate events, tragedies or vows. Between the two world wars, the members of the Altar Club of the Catholic Women's Association of Csongrád made chasubles, albs, altar pillows and altar frontals for the church.¹¹⁶

The replacements and renewal of chasubles, albs and ministrant's garments was an especially important and perpetual responsibility of both the believers and the parish priests. The church's chasuble collection was especially rich in white chasubles adorned with flowers and angels embroidered with bouillon or gobelin technique, and lilies with wire embroidery. Some have traditional Hungarian folk embroidery motifs. The collection also has cloaks and chasubles adorned with motifs of the Sacred Heart, the painted image of the resurrected Christ, Christograms, patterns of doves, wheat or grapevines. The labels on the chasubles suggest that they were made by the companies Oberbauer A. utóda in Budapest or A. Flemmich's Söhne in Vienna.

The various guilds, religious clubs, catholic associations and other establishments kept their flags in the nave of the parish church, besides certain altars¹¹⁷ and in the sanctuary. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of the flags in the church were those of guilds.¹¹⁸ In the second half of the nineteenth century the guild flags were joined by banners used during the pilgrimage¹¹⁹, as well as association banners. Among the religious associations, the Rosary Association, the Sacred Heart Association and the Altar Club had their own banners.¹²⁰ In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, associations of certain professions also made their church flags. Today, there are fifteen flags and banners in the nave.

Among the most important furniture of the church we find the goldsmith objects used in liturgy. Although certain eighteenth-century chalices enrich the collection of the church, the chalices, ciboria and other liturgical instruments used today are from the nineteenth century. In front of the Pietà and the Holy Cross altars, we

find reliquaries: one holding a bone fragment of Saint Theresa of Avila and of Saint John the Baptist; the other contains a fragmentary remain of the True Cross.

Chandeliers and dozens of candelabra – placed on the altars and installed on the walls – were necessary for the appropriate lighting of the church. The electricity was installed in the church in 1913.¹²¹ In the 1958 sacristy inventory 36 candelabra were registered, the majority of which was probably no longer in use.¹²² The three church chandeliers were taken down during the period of State Socialism. Representative László Murányi worked hard for having an authentic replica of the central, copper and crystal chandelier made. The chandelier was fabricated abroad and assembled in Budapest; its consecration ceremony took place in December 2007, celebrated by Dr Zoltán Jenes parish priest.¹²³

Today, there are three bells serving in the belfry of the Our Lady church. The biggest of the three inherited the dedication of the Sacred Heart bell taken during World War I; it even weighs the same as its predecessor (1450 kg). It was made in 1921 by favour of the bell fundraising commission established by István Szedlacek parish priest.¹²⁴ Besides the big bell is a 412-kilogram medium bell dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, also installed in the church tower after World War I.¹²⁵ The bell cast by Anton Zechenter in 1758, currently stored in the storage room of one of the oratories, served as the passing bell of the parish church until the 1990s. Since the bell cracked, its function has been filled by a bell brought in from the border.¹²⁶ The small bell weighing only 80 kilograms was cast in 1929 in honour of the *Patrona Hungariae* of the believers of Kónyaszék. The two larger bells are suspended on a steel profile yoke, while the smallest bell on a straight wooden yoke. All three bells have strapped clappers and powered by pulling magnets.¹²⁷

The first descriptions of the biggest festival of the parish, the feast day of the Assumption of Our Lady are dated to the mid-nineteenth cen-

tury. The pilgrimage was primarily attended by the Catholic farmer population of smaller neighbouring settlements. The people of Csongrád held a vigil fasting on the day before the feast day.¹²⁸ They whitewashed the facades of their houses, swept clean the streets and the courtyards; baked fresh *kalács* (sweet bread) and breads, butchered chickens and roosters.

The groups of pilgrims arrived on foot from settlements at a one- or two-day walking distance. On the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there were approximately 7 to 10 thousand pilgrims arriving to Csongrád during these days.¹²⁹ The banners appearing on the horizon were greeted with bell chimes. The children of Csongrád ran to welcome the pilgrims and to 'kiss the cross' in exchange for which the pilgrims gave them small icons and sweet bread.¹³⁰ The church curator offered sweets made by local women, wine and water to the pilgrims; if there was need, he helped them find accommodation.¹³¹ Most families stayed with the same family every year.¹³²

During the night before the feast day, they celebrated masses one after the other at the church; at midnight, they proceed to the stations of the Cross. Following the introductory song, the groups of pilgrims put their banners in the buckles fastened to the end of the pews.¹³³ The sermon at the 10 o'clock high mass was given by popular preachers.¹³⁴ The ceremonial character of the procession was anchored by 'greeting' mortar shots. The muffled cannon balls shot from the town hall square landed in the garden of the parish a few meters further.¹³⁵ The pilgrims usually confessed and had a communion; after the Mass and the procession, they bought some memorabilia at the fair (*búcsúfia*); then visited their friends and relatives in Csongrád.¹³⁶ In the afternoon, they bid farewell to the groups of pilgrims with bell chimes.¹³⁷

In the place of today's Szentháromság square park, on the former marketplace, and on the square in front of the church, there were fairs

where they mostly sold icons, rosaries, prayer books, small porcelain statues and the products of religious pulp literature. The evening balls were preceded by months of preparations. The income of the event was dedicated to some charitable end: a meal centre, new gear for the volunteer fire fighters, helping flood victims.

The most prominent event of the 1947, proclaimed as the Year of the Virgin Mary, was the three-day event series of the Tisza Marian Days. The main figure of the movement aiming to reinforce the believers in their spiritual renewal and in their faith was the principal speaker, the Prince Primate József Mindszenty.¹³⁸ The reports of the event of national importance all emphasised the high number of clerical and pilgrim participants (approximately 70 priests and 80 thousand believers, from fifty settlements of the country), the variety of the events (in all three churches, on the

Tisza river bank and in public squares), and the determinative importance of the event in the life of Csongrád.

Today, the church feast day is celebrated on the Sunday closest to the August 15 festival. Although it is still the day when the most local believers go to church, the festivities are much more modest today and the pilgrims from the countryside also show a more moderate interest in the event. On the initiative of János Galli chief cantor, it became a tradition since the 1990s for the members of the Csongrád brass band to accompany the procession.¹³⁹ The programs are organised by the local parish; therefore, they are purely religious events: a series of ecclesiastic concerts, litanies, Eucharistic adorations. Every ten years, the parish celebrates a festive Holy Mass and a procession commemorating the Tisza Marian Days.

Jegyzetek

¹ Erdélyi 1998. 7; Gyöngyössy 2014. 31–37. Kovács 1977 (1929).

² About the early eighteenth-century history of the settlement and for a more detailed account of the former Our Lady (present-day Saint Roch) church see: Bara – Gyöngyössy 2016.

³ MNL OL, P 398, 6691.

⁴ MNL OL, P 392, Lad. 35. No. 83a. // MNL OL, P 392, Lad. 35. No. 83a.

⁵ The importance of the letter's content is also confirmed by the fact that István Fábián parish priest later asked to have the letter at the archives of the bishopric, or to have it sent back to the parish so they can preserve it there. See: VPL APar. Cs. April 4, 1763, letter from István Fábián parish priest to the bishop of Vác.

⁶ VPL APar. Cs. 29 March 1763, letter from Antal Károlyi about building a new church.

⁷ VPL APar. Cs. 4 April 1763, letter from István Fábián parish priest to the bishop of Vác about the building of a new church.

⁸ According to the 1784 visitation and the *Historia Domus* of the church, the beginning of the construction and the laying of the cornerstone was in 1762. The unreliability of the latter document is well demonstrated by the fact that first, it associates this date with the time when Berinkei was parish priest, and later with the time when István Fábián was filling this position. See: 1784. VPKL, Liber VIII. 698–713. Cf. NPI *Historia Domus* I. 22, 105.

⁹ MNL OL, P 398, 78623. 29 March 1768, letter from István Vargha inspector of Csongrád to Antal Károlyi. Derekegyház.

¹⁰ MNL OL T 20, No. 195/1. Layout plans of the Csongrád church.

¹¹ Szarka (manuscript) 1967. 1.

¹² Dudás 2000/b. 54.

¹³ VPL 1778: Liber VII, 285–297.

- ¹⁴ Dudás 1999. 18–19. In 1767, they started the construction of a new parish building in the neighbourhood of the church. In a gesture of support, Károlyi waived part of the wine tithe. MNL OL, P 398, 11537. Petition of the city of Csongrád about the debt of 6000 Forints claimed for the construction of the church; VPL, 1842. Liber XVII. 149; NPI Historia Domus I. 22–23.
- ¹⁵ NPI Historia Domus I. 23.
- ¹⁶ VPL APar. Cs. é.n. Letter from István Vincze to the bishop of Vác. Thus far there are no clarifying source documents concerning the indulgence privileges presumably obtained from the pope in relation to the altar pieces.
- ¹⁷ VPL. APar. Cs. 3 March 1771. Letter from István Vincze to Vác about the benediction of the church (August 15, 1770). To be noted that according to a later entry of the Historia Domus and to the protocol of the 1784 episcopal visitation, the benediction of the church took place in 1769 on the occasion of the Assumption of Mary; that is, before the altar corresponding to this title had been set up. Cf. NPI Historia Domus I. 24. and VPL 1784. Liber VIII, 698.
- ¹⁸ For more detail see: Bara – Gyöngyössi 2014.
- ¹⁹ NPI Historia Domus I. Census by András Kanyó.
- ²⁰ VPL 1778. Liber VII, 285–297.
- ²¹ MNL OL, P 398, No. 33000. July 18, 1773. Letter from Antal Károlyi to his bonorum director. “As regards the damaged roof of the church, I wonder how it can be deteriorated even before it is completely finished, and the Town would not repair it? How much would the cost [of the repair] be, I am expecting your report, until then I am not allocating any funds.”; MNL OL P 398, 33005. 6 August 1773. Letter from Antal Károlyi to his bonorum director. “As regards the barely finished, yet already damaged roof of the church in Csongrád, I give my approval for your project of giving one year’s profit of a piece of cultivable manorial land to cover the costs of the roof renovation, and meanwhile, to borrow the money from the landlord’s treasury.”
- ²² MNL OL P 398, 42958. 19 July 1776. Letter from András Krecsmári, inspector of Hódmezővásárhely to Antal Károlyi.
- ²³ MNL OL, P 398, 32438. 22 April 1782. Letter from András Kanyó parish priest of Csongrád to Antal Károlyi.
- ²⁴ MNL OL, P 398, 43114. 30 May 1782. Letter from András Krecsmári inspector of Hódmezővásárhely to Antal Károlyi. Hódmezővásárhely; Ibid: No. 43118. 25 July 1782. Letter from András Krecsmári inspector of Hódmezővásárhely to Antal Károlyi. Hódmezővásárhely (with the cost estimates of Balthasar Fischer master mason enclosed).
- ²⁵ NPI Historia Domus I. 37.
- ²⁶ See: MNL OL, P 398, 32438. The enclosure of the letter of András Kanyó parish priest of Csongrád.
- ²⁷ VPL APar. Cs. 25 June 1891. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the Vác diocese; *Csongrádi Újság*, 20 June 1909. Volume VII. Nr. 25, p. 3.
- ²⁸ Dudás 1998. 109.
- ²⁹ NPI Historia Domus I. 37.
- ³⁰ MNL OL, P 398, 32440. 25 June 1791. Letter from András Kanyó to Antal Károlyi. Csongrád.
- ³¹ See: NPI Historia Domus I. 104–; They held a ceremonial funeral Mass at the church to the memory of Antal Károlyi who died on 24 August 1791 in Penzingen (Vienna). See: NPI Historia Domus I. 42.
- ³² VPL APar. Cs. é.n. Documents related to the repair of the church roof. János Erdélyi bonorum director’s instruction to the bailiff of Csongrád; correspondence between Ferenc Már manorial bailiff and the chapter of Vác.
- ³³ VPL APar. Cs. 11 June 1823. Letter from Ferenc Már bailiff to the Csongrád council.
- ³⁴ Dudás 1998. 115.
- ³⁵ VPL APar. Cs. 26 May 1842. Authorisation of István Károlyi for the heightening of the church. Fót.
- ³⁶ VPL APar. Cs. 26 May 1842. Certificate of Count István Károlyi István.
- ³⁷ NPI Historia Domus Volume I, 111.
- ³⁸ VPL APar. Cs. Correspondence between the Vác diocese and the Ferenc Alvinczi parish priest about the construction of the organ loft. (with enclosures).
- ³⁹ Váry 1974. 31.
- ⁴⁰ VPL APar. Cs. 18 February 1873. Letter of parish priest Alvinczy about the construction of the tower and the organ loft; VPL APar. Cs. 8 February 1873. The cost calculations of Mihály Horváth about the completed works.
- ⁴¹ *Csongrádi Újság*, 12 May 1912. Volume X. number 19, p. 3.
- ⁴² *Tiszavidék*, 20 December 1894. Volume V. number 51, p. 2.
- ⁴³ It is unclear whether, at this time, there was any structural change made to the tower, or only the original tin spire was replaced with a taller one.
- ⁴⁴ MNL CsML CsL Council Documents 1872–1829. History of the Catholic Church and the city, 1886.
- ⁴⁵ Dudás 1998. 109.

- ⁴⁶ Bittheuser's design drawings for the Csongrád spire was also the basis for finishing the spire of the church of Hódmezővásárhely. See: MNL OL, P 398, 43108. 26 September 1783. Letter from András Krecsmári inspector of Hódmezővásárhely to Antal Károlyi. Derekegyháza: "The walls of the tower of Hódmezővásárhely are built high [...], the steeple can be covered by the same spire as the one designed by Pittheuser for the tower in Csongrád."
- ⁴⁷ Published by: *Szentesi Lap*, 6 November 1896. Nr. 45; Referred to by: Tari 1977. 8.
- ⁴⁸ VPL APar. Cs. 29 January 1892. Letter from the bishop of Vác to Albin Csáky minister.
- ⁴⁹ VPL APar. Cs. 12 November 1891. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the diocese of Vác.
- ⁵⁰ VPL APar. Cs. 12 December 1891. Measures of the chief noble judge of Csongrád district. Notification of the office of *vicecomes*.
- ⁵¹ MNL CsML CsL Documents of the Town Council Meetings, 1848-1871. 5 March 1858. jk. 70. sz.
- ⁵² *Tiszavidek*, 11 September 1898. Volume IX. Nr. 37, p. 3.
- ⁵³ Szarka (manuscript) 1967. 4.
- ⁵⁴ MNL CsML CsL records of the Town Council meetings, 22 October 1901. jk. 284. sz.
- ⁵⁵ A proposal was made in February 1922 about the fire guards, besides their service of fire detection, should also toll the church bells thrice, at dawn, at noon, at seven and nine o'clock in the evening, as well as before Sunday Mass and high Mass, weekday Mass and litanies, and before Masses that are not held for the salvation of certain families. MNL CsML CsL Documents of the Mayor and of the Chief Justice 1872-1949 (1955). 6 February 1922. Assembly records of the Town Council about the wage increase of the church employees.
- ⁵⁶ *Csongrádi Lap*, 19 February 1911. Volume XXI. Nr. 8, p. 3.
- ⁵⁷ *Csongrádi Újság*, 14 January 1912. Volume X. Nr. 2, p. 3.
- ⁵⁸ *Csongrádi Újság*, 21 January 1912. Volume X. Nr. 3, p. 2.
- ⁵⁹ Forgó – Forgó 1987. 70-71; MNL CsML CsL Council Documents (1802) 1849-1871. Protocols of local Council meetings, a/7 – 13 k. 26 November 1859. jk. 315.
- ⁶⁰ *Csongrádi Lap*, 30 October 1898. Volume VIII. Nr. 44, p. 3.
- ⁶¹ VPL APar. Cs. 6 May 1889. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the diocese of Vác.
- ⁶² VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 3 February 1893. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the diocese of Vác.
- ⁶³ VPL APar. Cs. 15 April 1890. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the diocese of Vác.
- ⁶⁴ *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 29 September 1895. Volume II. Nr. 39, p. 3.
- ⁶⁵ *Tiszavidek*, 24 July 1904. Volume XV. Nr. 30, p. 2.
- ⁶⁶ *Csongrádi Újság*, 22 October 1905. Volume III. Nr. 43, p. 2.
- ⁶⁷ "The tower clock of our main church, which is the only public clock of our town, for which it is also the common chronological point of reference for every fellow inhabitant, is old and shabby, unwell and weary and stops working every now and then. Which is no wonder, since the poor clock was already old in 1785 when the city magistrate of the time instated it in its 'high' and important position. They bought it at a rag fair and, thus, it is no wonder that after 125 years of labour it yearns for some well-deserved rest; because even if it had been brand new at its arrival to the Csongrád church tower, it could have been justified to grow tired of 125 years of service." *Csongrádi Újság*, 4 December 1910. Volume VIII. Nr. 49, p. 1. Even in 1924, the school children of Csongrád rather adjusted their morning wakeup calls to the sound of the mill horn.
- ⁶⁸ Szarka (manuscript) 1967. 1.
- ⁶⁹ Dudás 2000./a 84. Offer: NPI June 11, 1912. The offer of the Hungarian Electricity company.
- ⁷⁰ *Csongrádi Újság (II)* 2 August 1925. Volume IV. Nr. 53, p. 3.
- ⁷¹ NPI Historia Domus II. 104.
- ⁷² Dudás Lajos 2000/a. 102.
- ⁷³ NPI 27 December 1952. Letter from the bishop of Vác to János Szolnoky.
- ⁷⁴ NPI 15 July 1958. Letter from the Csongrád Városi Tanács Végrehajtóbizottságának levele a helyi plébánosnak.
- ⁷⁵ *Hirmondó*, newspaper of the Our Lady parish, summer 2010, 12.
- ⁷⁶ The former baptistery, currently used as storage space, served as a confession sacristy in the 1940s. It contained five "very simple" confessionals. NPI 2 May 1940. Survey of the Office of Ecclesiastical Art.
- ⁷⁷ MNL OL, P 1511, box 1, 229r. 16 April 1787. Report from Joseph Bittheuser to Antal Károlyi. Nagykároly.
- ⁷⁸ The angel figures mentioned in the source document are not identical with the current (plaster) statues on the main altar.
- ⁷⁹ NPI Historia Domus Vol. I, 165. One of the early-twentieth-century press reports refers to the main altar as a gift from the Countess Erzsébet Károlyi. It is probably a mistaken information, the mentioned countess, the elder sister of Mihály Károlyi, lived between 1872 and 1954. See: *Csongrádi Lap*, 18 August 1912, Vol. XXII, No. 36, p. 3.
- ⁸⁰ NPI 14 May 1914. Price offer of István Szubota; Kovácsik 2010. 156.
- ⁸¹ The planned dimensions of the altarpiece: 7 feet wide, 14 feet tall.

- ⁸² The scale is presumably left off from a previously sent sketch or design plan. MNL OL, P 1511, box 1, 229r. Joseph Bittheuser's report to Antal Károlyi. Nagykároly, 16 April 1787. Enclosed to the report, Joseph Bittheuser's proportional sketches drawn for the painter, Cimbal, including the proportional scale of the Csongrád high altar's design plan, as well as the draft plans detailing the size of the altarpiece of Mary's Assumption. See: MNL OL, P 1511, box 1, 185r.
- ⁸³ The latter painting is a copy of Titian's: *Assunta*.
- ⁸⁴ Vannay was born in 1862 in Upper Hungary. Between 1883 and 1886 he studied at the University of Fine Arts in Budapest, and then he moved to Csongrád. He was chosen for the position of art teacher at the Csongrád Civil School in 1890. Very soon, he became a determining figure of the Csongrád public life. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the local consumer association; he was first deputy president, then president of the association. He worked as editor-in-chief with Mihály Sággy at the monthly journal *Szövetkezet* [Association]. He was a talented portraitist and copy painter. Although a radical liberal and a Calvinist, he was continuously commissioned by the local magistrate and the local Roman Catholic parish office. In 1900, he painted a Károly Csemegi portrait, and a portrait of Lajos Kossuth for the 1902 Kossuth memorial event. He also made set decoration and background paintings for theatre plays. He was only 49 years old when he passed away in 1911 in Dobsina, where he had moved from Csongrád in 1905. *Csongrád*, 30 March 1890. Vol. I, No. 11, p. 3; *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 1 July 1894, Vol. I, No. 16, p. 3; *Csongrádi Lap*, 20 May 1900, Vol. X, No. 21, p. 2; *Vasárnapi Újság*, 4 June 1911. Vol. LVIII, No. 23, p. 468.
- ⁸⁵ Dudás 2000/b. 53.
- ⁸⁶ NPI 16 May 1914. Contract between the parish and the entrepreneurs.
- ⁸⁷ NPI Historia Domus I. 25.
- ⁸⁸ It is more likely that they had a new altarpiece made taking the size of the altar structure into account, as in the case of the Saint John of Nepomuk altar and the high altar.
- ⁸⁹ VPL, 1778: Liber VII, p. 285.; VPL, 1784: Liber VIII. 698.
- ⁹⁰ The sources first mention it in 1842. See: VPL 1842: Liber XVII, 144.; VPL APar. Cs. List of vestments of the church from 1827.
- ⁹¹ Dudás 2000/b. 53.
- ⁹² NPI 2 May 1940. Survey of the Office of Ecclesiastical Art.
- ⁹³ NPI 27 February 1957. Letter from the bishop of Vác to the parish priest of Csongrád.
- ⁹⁴ *Csongrádi Újság*, 14 August 1910. Vol. VIII, No. 33, p. 3.
- ⁹⁵ VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 27 August 1898. Interrogation protocol of the Episcopal See.
- ⁹⁶ Dudás 1999. 10.
- ⁹⁷ Around 9 October 1779, Antal Károlyi with his son, the then 11-year-old József Károlyi visited the church personally. See: VPL APar. Letter from Tamás Cs. Tóth parish priest to the bishop of Vác. Csongrád, 9 October 1779.; VPKL 1778. Liber VII, 285–297.
- ⁹⁸ NPI Historia Domus I. 165.
- ⁹⁹ An organ with 18 mutations: 1784. VPL Liber VIII. 698–713.; 1842 VPL Liber XVII. 143–
- ¹⁰⁰ In 1790, they decorated (painted and gilded) the structure of the organ: NPI Historia Domus I. 104–.
- ¹⁰¹ NPI Historia Domus I. 119.
- ¹⁰² In the visitation protocol, they mention an organ of 18 mutations; and the cited *Historia Domus* claims that it was extended to 24 stops: "I had the entire organ drawn closer to the centre of the church by one fathom, and had a new double grooved positivum body, two brand new keyboards, 4 new mutations and a harmonium; I had the entire instrument placed on two iron columns and thus, the damaged 16 stop organ became a 24 stop, impressive, ornate, and good organ." They placed a commemoration scroll inside the organ body.
- ¹⁰³ *Csongrádi Lap*, 27 February 1910, Vol. XX, No. 9, p. 2.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Csongrádi Újság*, 13 March 1910, Vol. VIII, No. 11, p. 3; The organ eventually cost 17,220 koronas. 8,000 was donated by László Károlyi, 500 by the city, and the rest was covered from private donations. See: NPI Historia Domus II. 5.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Csongrádi Újság*, 27 November 1910. Vol. VIII, No. 48, p. 3.
- ¹⁰⁶ VPL APar. Cs. 1 June 1891. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the Vác diocese. The pedestals were made by János Géberth, a church decorator and gilder from Budapest.
- ¹⁰⁷ Kovácsik 2010. 156; VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 31 August 1898. Interrogation protocol of the Episcopal See. The couple's name is also associated – among others – with one of the János Piroška paintings, an ostensory stand, and several processional crosses. They financed the re-gilding of the high altar and donated a considerable amount to the organ fund. Their family pew can be still seen in the church, to the right of the church entrance. VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 22 June 1898. Interrogation protocol of the Episcopal See. Confession of János Máté.
- ¹⁰⁸ The painting was done in 2006–2007. The inscription of the copperplate on the frame reads: "We are only wanderers and travellers on this earth, our home is Heaven. – in memory of Orsi Dányi."



- ¹⁰⁹ Veronika M. Simon's paintings representing Vilmos Apor can be found in several churches: in Segesvár (Sighișoara), Transylvania; in the basilica of Nagyvárad (Oradea); in churches in Székesfehérvár, Budapest, Jászó, Gyula and Szolnok.
- ¹¹⁰ VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 28 February 1899. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the Vác diocese.
- ¹¹¹ VPL APar. Cs. 1 June 1891. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the Vác diocese.
- ¹¹² VPL APar. Cs. 22 November 1898. Letter from Rókus Bába Szabó to the Vác diocese.
- ¹¹³ "There are too many pretty, old pews made hardwood in the nave of the church." NPI 2 May 1940. Survey of the Office of Ecclesiastical Art.
- ¹¹⁴ *Csongrádi Újság*, 20 November 1904, Vol. II, No. 47, p. 1.
- ¹¹⁵ VPL APar. Cs. 3 May 1827. The list of the church furnishings and vestments by László Szabó parish priest. Csongrád, *Csongrádi Újság*, 2 June 1929. Vol. VIII, No. 66, p. 4.
- ¹¹⁶ The flags of the rosary association were placed close to the Mary altar.
- ¹¹⁷ About the history of the guilds of Csongrád and the fate of the guild flags see: Gyöngyössy 2013.
- ¹¹⁸ About the pilgrimage practice of the people of Csongrád see: Gyöngyössy (manuscript) 2018.
- ¹¹⁹ For more on the religious association of Csongrád see: Gyöngyössy 2014.
- ¹²⁰ Dudás 2000./a 84. Offer: NPI 11 June 1912, offer from Hazai Villamossági Rt (Hungarian electric company).
- ¹²¹ NPI Dr. Somogyi Tibor, 1958.
- ¹²² Information kindly provided by László Murányi.
- ¹²³ Inscription: THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS! THE REFUGE FOR THE PEOPLE OF CSONGRÁD! HAVE MERCY FOR US! THIS BELL WAS CAST FROM THE DONATIONS OF THE ZEALOUS BELIEVERS OF CSONGRÁD BY THE BELL FUNDRAISING COMMISSION PRESIDED BY ISTVÁN SZEDLACSEK PARISH PRIEST AND SÁNDOR TEKULICS. IN THE TIME OF DR ISTVÁN HANAUER DIOCESAN BISHOP OF VÁC IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1921. CAST BY BELLFOUNDER LÁSZLÓ SZLEZÁ IN BUDAPEST.
- ¹²⁴ Inscription: OUR HEAVENLY PATRON, KEEP YOUR FOLLOWERS OF CSONGRÁD IN THE JOYS OF HEAVEN! THIS BELL WAS CAST IN HONOUR OF THE PATRON SAINT OF OUR CHURCH, OUR VIRGIN MOTHER ASSUMED INTO HEAVEN, IN THE TIME OF PIUS XI AND ISTVÁN Á. HANAUER DIOCESAN BISHOP OF VÁC AT THE EXPENSE OF THE CHURCH BY ISTVÁN SZEDLACSEK PARISH PRIEST IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1926. CAST BY BELLFOUNDER LÁSZLÓ.
- ¹²⁵ Inscription: THIS BELL WAS CAST IN HONOUR OF HUNGARY'S PATRON BY THE BELIEVERS OF KÓNYASZÉK 1929 CAST BY BELLFOUNDER LÁSZLÓ SZLEZÁ IN BUDAPEST.
- ¹²⁶ Data of Ferenc Bajkó. See: <http://magyarharangok.hu>
- ¹²⁷ "By the power of the papal disputation in force, the consumption of greasy food is permitted; only meat and multiple satiety is prohibited." *Tiszavidék*, 13 August 1899, Vol. X, No. 33, p. 3.
- ¹²⁸ The number of pilgrims in 1891 was as follows: 648 from Szentes, 118 from Szegvár, 390 from Mindszent, 146 from Alpár, 86 from Kunszentmárton, 240 from Cibakháza, 248 from Félegyháza, 380 from Csanytelek, 220 from Tömörkény, 408 from Csépa, 114 from Szelevényről. 1245 people arrived on coaches from more distant settlements. *Csongrádi Lap*, 23 August 1891, Vol. I, No. 29, p. 3.
- ¹²⁹ Kókai 2010. 9.
- ¹³⁰ *Csongrádi Lap*, 21 August 1892. Vol. II, No. 34, p. 3. The pilgrims were accommodated in the streets around the church, they slept on straw. CsKK TLM NA 47-2010 Study of Saint. Interview with Mrs Antal Sándor. 1996; Interview with Mrs János Galli (born 1924) 2018.
- ¹³¹ "The pilgrims from Cibakháza were returning guest at Grandmother's house." Kókai 2010. 9.
- ¹³² Interview with Mrs János Galli (born 1924) 2018.
- ¹³³ *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 18 August 1895. Vol. II, No. 33, p. 3.
- ¹³⁴ MNL CsML CsL Records of the Town Council meetings, 29 December 1899. jk. No. 221.
- ¹³⁵ Dudás 1998. 108. Antal Söhlyá cantor mentions convivially in one of his writings that, in Csongrád, the pilgrims are sometimes forcefully captured and invited for a feast by locals. MNL CsML CsL Documents of Lajos Dudás teacher and regional historian. Folder of pilgrimages.
- ¹³⁶ Kókai 2010. 9.
- ¹³⁷ For more detail about the social objectives of the Marian year see: Gulyás 2015. 825-826. For a detailed bibliography, see: Fodor 2017.
- ¹³⁸ Interview with Mrs. János Galli (born 1924) 2018.